The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives a brief summary of important matters affecting labor, occurring in the industrial, legislative, and judicial fields, and such other information that will benefit the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

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AGITATE! EDUCATE! ORGANIZE!

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ANTI-UNIONISTS SAY THEY FAVOR PUBLICITY, BUT IGNORE CAUSE FOR WEST VIRGINIA'S CIVIL WAR

The reception given Senator Kenyon's views on the West Virginia situation (senate report No. 457) is a poor propaganda for "can't-strike" advocates, who say: Publish the facts in an industrial dispute and the public will insist on justice.

Nothing is said, however, of the times that these facts will be published most sparsely—or not at all—as is the case with the following declaration by Senator Kenyon:

"While the evidence is voluminous, the causes are few. The issue is plain and perfectly apparent. The operators in this particular section of West Virginia under consideration openly announce, and did before the committee, that they will not employ men belonging to the unions, for, as they say, they believe they will become agitators and further, that they have the right, and will exercise it if they desire, to discharge a man if he belongs to the union, and in making these claims they believe themselves to be within their constitutional rights."

The issue is plain and perfectly apparent," says the chairman of the senate committee, who informs his colleagues that turmoil in West Virginia is caused by the coal owners' denial of their employes' right to join a lawful organization; that the coal owners are supreme; that their serfdom must not be challenged, and that they will discharge any worker who joins a trade union.

What does the United States senate do in answer to this challenge, conveyed through the chairman of one of its committees?

Where is the public press, that supposedly mighty engine that is ever molding public opinion in the interest of morality and justice?

Where are our prominent citizens, who lose sleep lest some trade union interferes with the inalienable right of unorganized to work for starvation wages?

These forces are silent. They quietly overlook the incident while glibly assuring the workers:

"If you accept our 'can't-strike' plan we will tell the public all about your troubles in the future. And the public, of course, will forget its own troubles and pick up your fight."

The answer to this reasoning is the gingerly manner in which Senator Kenyon's statement has been handled by these forces that chirp on the power of public opinion. This lawmaker shows the cause —he says it is "perfectly apparent"—of one of the fiercest industrial disputes in the history of the nation, and this information is received in silence by alleged publicity advocates.

This silence is to be expected from those who are in secret sympathy with the coal autocrats, as is proven by their advocacy of "can't-strike" laws.

The public opinion they favor is to be used only against the workers.

This one-sided public opinion is now being developed in the event that the miners are forced to call a nation-wide strike. No mention will be made of coal owners who have broken their agreement with the union.

Labor is aware that all social progress depends upon an enlightened public opinion, but there is a difference between the real, substantial public opinion and the imitation kind.

One is the result of long experience of a people who accept new viewpoints through education, necessity and changing conditions.

The other is a bubbling, artificial wave that has been created by privilege for the purpose of reducing wages, breaking strikes and serving as an alibi for feudal employers, injunction judges and hostile legislators.

"CAN'T-STRIKE" ADVOCATES OPPOSE CLASS LEGISLATION

Two-Faced Attitude of Sham Americans Who Urge Handcuff Laws For Labor While Demanding Equality For All Citizens.

St. Paul, Minn., Feb. 25.—Business men and statesmen—would-be and make believes—applauded two state governors at the annual banquet of the St. Paul Lincoln club when they denounced "class legislation" and favored "can't-strike" laws.

None noted the inconsistency of the solemn-faced speakers, who, in sepulchre tones, insisted that workers be handcuffed to their jobs and that every patriot should oppose "class legislation."

Governor Allen, of Kansas, told how his law has brought peace and prosperity to Kansas—or rather, how he hopes it will if trade union "agitators" cease agitating.

Governor McKelvie, of Nebraska, railed at the senate farm bloc. It appears that this is the first bloc he ever discovered of a legislative body, and his denunciations could be heard clear into Wall street.

Business men applauded the safe and sane statesmen, who showed the need for outlawing strikes and the danger of "class legislation."

No one suggested that business men be jailed or fined if they attempted to sabotage production or close their plants.

'CAN'T-STRIKE" LAWS ARE LESSON TO LABOR

New York, Feb. 25.—If labor is slow and ineffective, why this clamor everywhere for "can't-strike" laws, asks Justice, official magazine of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' union.

"The growth of the labor movement is disturbing the peace of our chambers of commerce," says his labor paper. "While we believe that the scheme of prohibiting strikes will give a powerful impetus to the labor movement, we point out to those of our readers who may have been thinking that our labor movement is slow and ineffective, that our rulers and masters disagree with them entirely.

"The masters consider our labor movement as the only great menace to their continued domination, and that explains the meaning of their newest plot to destroy the labor movement by legislation. We are convinced that this attempt will be a lesson on the need of greater unity and loyalty to a union on the workers and that it will drive out their pessimism.

"Henceforth the workers must forget all their imaginary differences and line up their forces against the dark powers which threaten the life of the labor movement.

"But should all these means of protest fail and labor perform be made part of our law books, we should not despair of the character and aspirations of our labor movement. The modern workers can no longer be converted into a slave, and if he decides to quit work, quit he will, legally if possible, illegally if necessary."

MINERS ARE VICTIMIZED.

Indianapolis, Feb. 25.—The reason why Alabama coal owners fought last year for the anti-union shop is shown by the following rates paid by the Tennessee coal, iron and railroad company before the strike and now:

Picked mine coal, $1.09 per ton; now, 72 cents.

Rockman, $5.16; now, $2.65.

Slack helper, $4.07; now, $2.34.

Trackman, $5.16; now, $2.65.

Machine mined coal, 82 cents; now 52 cents.

A committee representing Miners' union No. 2317, Wylam, Ala., writes to the United Mine Workers' Journal:

"All other classes of labor has suffered the same reductions in and around the mines, notwithstanding the fact that the coal owners promised Governor Kilby that they would abide by the scale of wages that then existed until April 1, 1922.

"Kilby sent militia and state police to defeat us, and then when our officials put the question in his hands for him to settle, he settled not none of our demands were met."

PROTESTS FREIGHT RATES.

Washington, Feb. 25.—Senator Swanson of Virginia presented to the United States senate a series of resolutions adopted by the Virginia legislature against present railroad rates. The Virginia lawmakers declare that the multiplicity of freight charges, of approximately 80 per cent more than they were prior to 1917, prevents such a reduction in living cost and retail charges as the present price of agricultural products and building material at point of production would seem to warrant.

"We believe a substantial reduction in freight rates is necessary and will materially aid in bringing about normal business conditions; that it will result in a revival of business and a consequent increase in tonnage to the carriers, which increased tonnage will more than offset revenue from rate reductions."

"OPEN" SHOP IS FAKE.

Chicago, Feb. 25.—The "open" shop is a fake—there is no such thing," writes Samuel Untermyer, New York attorney, to John Fitzpatrick, president of the Chicago federation of labor.

"During my investigation I proved, I think conclusively, that the case of the steel company and the national civic federation that it is worse than a sham," said the New Yorker.

FIX LANDLORDS' PROFIT.

New York, Feb. 25.—Eight per cent profit is a fair return for real estate owners according to the appellate division of the supreme court. The decision will establish a precedent, lower court officials say, and will set aside a former decision which said 10 per cent was a fair return.

LOCKOUT IN DENMARK.

New York, Feb. 25.—Associated Press dispatches from Copenhagen state that a general lockout has been declared by Denmark employers who are attempting to enforce the 48 hour week and a 20 per cent wage reduction.

VICIOUS SALES TAX OPPOSED BY WORKERS

Washington, Feb. 25.—"Organized labor stands 100 per cent for the soldiers' bonus, but is opposed to a sales tax as a means of raising revenue for the bonus, just as it is opposed to a sales tax to pay any debt contracted by the government," said President Gompers in a public statement.

Labor recognizes in the proposal to attach the sales tax to the soldiers' adjusted compensation, bill a subterfuge, intended either to defeat the bonus, or to create a feeling of resentment against the veterans of the world war by placing the burden upon those least able to bear it and thus benefiting the excess profits who profiteered so relentlessly during the period of the war and since the war.

"The bonus should have the approval of congress, but to create a sales tax would be to turn a measure of justice into an imposition and an injustice upon the whole people. The position of labor upon the sales tax is stated officially in the following resolution:

"Resolved, That the A. F. of L. in convention assembled, declares against the imposition of a retail tax on consumption, and demands that the highest rate of taxation levied during the war upon incomes and excess profits be retained until the war money cost of the war has been paid."

"Congress refused to adopt the sales tax as a part of the general revenue provisions. That proposal should not now be used to becloud the merits of a measure intended to do justice to those who patriotically defended the country in its hour of need."

PLEA FOR CAUTION.

Chicago, Feb. 25.—"In the present economic storm, industrial leaders who think the employers would like to exploit entirely to their own benefit, and take advantage of the weakness every one of us to be more than ever on our guard," says the Bakers' Journal.

"All labor organizations today are facing the most serious crisis in their entire history. And to those who are entrusted with the responsibility of guiding and directing organizations safely through the present storm, it is quite natural that they fall the unenviable lot to 'apply the brakes' in order to prevent hasty and rash action, which, in the ultimate consequences, will only bring disaster that at which the employers are aiming.

"Times will not always remain as they are today. Sunshine has invariably followed even the worst of rainstorms and the present industrial depression will soon again make room for better and more flourishing—and above all—more advantageous conditions.

"That in spite of this reactionary campaign we have been able to not only managed to hold our own in maintaining our organization intact, but, a remarkable and wonderful progress, in itself, which ought to be a consolation, and a source of encouragement to all, and which should make us the more determined in its defense."

JAP WORKERS AWAKE.

Washington, Feb. 25.—Labor unions in Japan are making a vigorous fight to hold gains during the war, according to press dispatches from the orient. It is stated that the execution of a few minor agitators Japan did not know of such a thing as the labor movement of a western country before the war.

The labor movement in 1921, it is stated, started in speed and magnitude and questions of great consequence have arisen with the result followed one another in quick succession, and 1922 carries with it so many issues that a feeling of uneasiness until there will be serious developments before the expiration of the year, especially for the great landlords."

SIGNS MARKETING BILL.

Washington, Feb. 25.—President Harding has signed the co-operative marketing bill. This law is administered by the secretary of agriculture, who will permit farmers to co-operate in buying and selling without fear of prosecution under the Sherman anti-trust law. Agricultural organizations say the bill will enable farmers to get a better price for their products.

The heavy blow in the senate developed its greatest power while the bill was under consideration. The senate committee reported amendments and the fight defeated the passage of the bill as reported from the house.

HOMES ARE FIRE TRAPS.

Harrisburg, Pa., Feb. 25.—Managers of institutions for the care of the aged which have fire hazards especially dangerous have been notified by the state health department to remedy conditions or face court proceedings.

It was stated that conditions of fire hazard in many of these homes, especially those housing the aged, are "nothing short of criminal" and unreasonable."

PRINTERS RAISE WAGES.

Quebec, Feb. 25.—Newspaper printers have raised wages $2 a week as a result of conference between the interested parties. The new scale calls for $35 for 48-hour week of day work and $37 for a 48-hour week of night work. The old scale was $28 and $30.

MEXICAN PEOPLE WANT PEACE BUT DEMAND FAIR TREATMENT

Washington, Feb. 25.—"Mexican workers, both organized and unorganized, are supporting President Obregon in his refusal to bind Mexico to certain pledges, as a price of recognition by the United States," said Luis N. Morones, representative of the Mexican Federation of Labor, who is now in Washington.

"The demands made upon Mexico by the United States strike at the dignity of our national life," said the Mexican trade unionist. "We are asked to pledge our nation to protect life and property, thereby implying that the Mexican government now does not do its duty in this regard.

"No other government is ever asked to make this pledge, and the Mexican government refuses to place itself in a position where it would acknowledge that it has failed in the first test that is applied to any government.

"Our citizens and our government want to live in harmony and concord with the nations of the world, and especially with our sister republic north of the Rio Grande. But while we desire peace we will not sacrifice the standards of honor and respect which every people must maintain.

"There is law observance in Mexico, despite the efforts of special interests to foment disorder and even rebellion. President Obregon is being supported by a united people. While we are conscious of the efforts of certain influences in the United States to establish ill will between the two countries, we are confident that the great majority of Americans are acquainted with the workings of this system.

"I understand that at the present time some of your federal lawmakers favor an investigation by your congress of the possible relations between big business and several alleged 'revolutions' in Mexico. This is significant and indicates a new trend of opinion among patriotic Americans. If an investigation of this character is made, I venture the opinion that most interesting disclosures will result."

LUMBER UP; WAGES DOWN.

Seattle, Feb. 25.—Increased lumber production, increased sales, higher prices and lower wages mark present conditions in the lumber industry, according to the bulletin issued by the International Union of Timber Workers.

"Wages are still down. Some mills have made further reductions since the first of the year, which the workers quietly accepted the employers' contention that wages are based on prices and profits. The result is further demand that employmen, and other boss-controlled, must open their books and prove by actual figures some arguments as those advanced by the employers. Their stand on this question is quite well known to every worker in this industry who has taken the slightest trouble to inform himself.

The bulletin states that reports from Laurel, Miss., show that common labor is paid $1.30 a day, "with hours as the employers may fancy, but never less than 10 per day."

In Merrill, Wis., and other northwest points, common labor is paid from $1.80 to $2.50 per day. In Laona, Wis., a lumber company pays from $25 per month to $1.25 per day. A company "union" is maintained at this place.

Despite these handicaps the International Union of Timber Workers is experiencing a vigorous organizing campaign throughout the entire west and northwest lumber region. Representatives of this union are listened to now, since the several companies "unions" have assisted lumber barons in every way possible.

BANK GROUP ANSWERED.

Cleveland, Ohio, Feb. 25.—The bank of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers has won its first round against the clearing house association of this city, and is waiting for all the local banks to make another move.

The Brotherhood bank does not belong to the association, which recently advertised against banks not members with the result that failed to display their co-called "sign of safety."

Officers of the brotherhood bank called upon the association "to come into the open and lay their cards on the table so that the public might be fully advised as to the underlying bases on which it functions. It was charged by the brotherhood bank that the association is a monopoly, organized by a group of bankers for the purpose of fixing exchange, "unjustly" rates to depositors, and fees and interest charges to borrowers.

IDLENESS BREEDS CRIME.

New York, Feb. 25.—"The effect of business depression is shown in the farm bloc in the senate, delayed its greatest power while the farm bill was under consideration. The senate committee reported amendments and the fight defeated the passage of the bill as reported from the house.

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CO-OPS PAY DIVIDENDS.

Odin, Ill., Feb. 25.—The co-operative society at this place has paid a dividend or returned saving of 5 per cent for the last six months of 1921. Sales for the year totaled $1,462,85.

WATER USERS MUST PAY.

Albany, N. Y., Feb. 25.—Water power interests can be controlled by the state, even though they have perpetual charters, said Supreme Court Justice Staley, at a hearing before a state legislative committee on water powers